

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 252.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1858.

PRICE 1*l*d.

## A PERSECUTED CENTURY.

For some time past, it has been a fashion amongst writers to run down the eighteenth century; and at length the rage has come to a fearful boil over in the new work of Mr Carlyle. The great difficulty of this eminent author in treating Frederick the Great is, by his own profession, how to 'shew a man who is a reality worthy of being seen,' and yet 'keep his century, as a hypocrisy worthy of being hidden and forgotten, in due abeyance.' This century, he calls it, of 'accumulated falsities'—so false, that it had no longer the consciousness of being so—having 'nothing grand in it, except that grand universal suicide, named French Revolution, by which it terminated its otherwise most worthless existence with at least one worthy act; setting fire to its old home and self, and going up in flames and volcanic explosions, in a truly memorable and important manner. A very fit termination,' he says he thankfully feels, 'for such a century. Century spendthrift, fraudulent bankrupt, gone at length utterly insolvent, without real *money* of performance in its pocket, and the shops declining to take hypocrisies and speciosities any further: what could the poor century do but at length admit: "Well, it is so. I am a swindler century, and have long been; having learned the trick of it from my father and grandfather; knowing hardly any trade but that in false bills, which I thought foolishly might last for ever, and still bring at least beef and pudding to the favoured of mankind. And behold it ends; and I am a detected swindler, and have nothing even to eat. What remains but that I blow my brains out, and do at length one true action?" Which the poor century did; many thanks to it, in the circumstances.'

Surely the accusative case is getting into a sad predominance among us, when a whole century can be arraigned on cumulative evidence in this manner.

We humbly presume to think that the eighteenth was a pretty fair century, as centuries go. It brought us no such movement as a Reformation, indeed—the special work of the sixteenth—but the brewer found he could not boil down a black man every day, whatever decension it might occasion in the repute of his beer: and so it is, there is not a Reformation to be done every century. Apart from lucky accidents of that kind so thinly sown, looking to what centuries in general are, we rather think well of the eighteenth century; perhaps in some respects it was a better century than our own, which, with more light, has also the demerit of keeping up a good deal more darkness.

Only remember, it was in the eighteenth century

that the inhabitants of this world were first generally informed of how it has its relative place and motion amongst the other worlds—of what lightning is—what air is—what ultimate elements the solids of the earth are composed of. It was in this century that men were enabled to add planets to the solar system, and whole legions of new and undreamed-of organisms to creation. It was this century which first really embraced and profited by the inductive philosophy, and began to see with any clearness that there is a fixed order of things in the universe, the study of and conformity to which gives a just economy to human life. This a poor century, which saw Franklin bring down thunder on the string of a kite at Philadelphia, and Watt laying the foundation of the grandest physical power possessed by man in a little workshop in Glasgow College! Why, what would Mr Carlyle have of a century, if he slighted these things? What other century, will he tell us, ever did such things for its own children, and those who were to follow after them?

It seems, however, to be in moral respects that Mr Carlyle chiefly finds the condemnation of the eighteenth century. It was a century trading in false bills. Was it so, indeed? It was the first century that ever saw through the gross superstitions which had made all preceding centuries believe in sorcerers and jugglers, and condemn old women for witchcraft. It was a hypocritical century, working upon speciosities till it was out of all credit. Was it so truly? To our mind, so far from being specially an insincere century, it appears as just the least so of all centuries. In the previous one, to dissent from the established church inferred, in Britain, serious penalties to every grade of society. In Mr Carlyle's native country, to disown presbytery brought excommunication—that is, social outlawry, loss of goods, and of place in the country; on a change of rule, to act against episcopacy inferred dragooning in the fields. In the eighteenth century, nearly every such penal consequence to nonconformity in both ends of the island had disappeared. In which of these two kinds of circumstances was it that hypocrisy was most likely to be practised? Most men nowadays have a relish and an approval for toleration. Was there toleration in the seventeenth century? On the contrary, the word was a reproach. James I. indignantly defended himself against the imputation of being favourable to it. It was formally repudiated by the Long Parliament and Westminster Assembly of Divines as the nurse of all heresies; and when Alexander Henderson, the leading Scotch Covenanting divine, preached to the House in recommendation of his own favourite ecclesiastical polity, he denounced

none so much as those who held 'that every one should be left to preach, profess, and print what he liked.' If we look across the Atlantic, we find the same spirit. There the very men who had fled from intolerance, practised the fiercest intolerance themselves. Roger Williams, the first enunciator of the principle of liberty of conscience, had to fly from his own state of Rhode Island, and skulk in the wilderness, exposed to the severities of winter and to starvation. Various Quakers were hanged. Contrast with this the eighteenth century, in which every one was fully allowed to 'preach, profess, and print what he liked.' But contrast it also with the nineteenth, which should know so much better. Does Clement XIV. suppressing the Jesuits look ill against Pio Nono denouncing all who disrespect the Immaculate Conception? Does Austria, under Joseph II. and his prodigious reforms, pale beside Austria in 1858 under the new concordat? Has the liberalism of Catherine II. been well exchanged for the fanatic cruelties and propagandism of Nicolas I.? Is the France of easy-going Louis XV. improved upon in respect of religious freedom by the France of Louis Napoleon? There were strong convictions in the sixteenth century, as there are, or seem to be, now; and in strong convictions Mr Carlyle delights. But somehow, strong convictions have an unpleasant affinity to burnings, and throat-cuttings, and pestering of one's neighbours. What Mr Carlyle delights in is ordinarily felt to be at once a general inconvenience, and ineffectual for even the assumedly good ends it proposes. It is highly questionable how far a century is improved by it when it is not put under very strong checks—an article not always very ready at command for the purpose. In fact, we do not know a more formidable state of things amongst mankind than a *mélée* of strong convictions; and we sincerely hope that Mr Carlyle may never be punished with the realisation of his desires regarding it.

If we confine our view to Great Britain, we shall see that, in economic and some other respects, the eighteenth was not a bad century. It saw the long pacific administration of Walpole, in which we threw remarkably well under a system of parliamentary hypocrisy. It gave us India. We lost, indeed, our American colonies; but it was a gain to general humanity, and we may now forget the stupidity of George III. in our sympathy with the glory of George Washington. During this period the population of England was greatly increased, her wealth probably quadrupled, roads, canals, posts established, a free press created, the national taste regaled with an elegant literature. It gave us Addison, Pope, Goldsmith, Burke, and Burns. Nor were great soldiers wanting. Marlborough, Saxe, Frederick, Clive, were far from being common-place people: indeed, it may be asked where are their equals now? Oh, Mr Carlyle, this a poor century in great men! Look at home, dear sir, and say if the *curta supplex* of historical personages now living gives you a title of reproach.

Finally, as to this same suicide which the eighteenth century is said to have performed upon itself. A bad business truly, and doubtless brought about by real evils, for which some people were to blame, either on the ground of their want of political wisdom or their wicked selfishness. Yet look also at the groping sense of right and the splendid good designs towards mankind at large, which prompted the reforming party. These things, albeit unlucky in their results, are things properly to the credit of the century. It was the first time that a great people demanded to be treated with justice by their rulers, and that, we conceive, is no small matter in the

history of this world. Even, then, in this dismal end the century came to, we find something to admire and sympathise with. It seems to stamp our proposition with a final approval, that there have been worse centuries than the eighteenth.

#### THE NEWSPAPER WORLD.

WERE the privilege granted to Master Nathaniel Butter, the originator of the present form of newspaper, to 'revisit the glimpses of the moon,' he would feel astounded at seeing what a mighty power his humble efforts to produce a sheet of 'newes' had evoked. And were it further permitted that he might see, as in a glass, the progress and struggles of his invention, as it travelled over the thorny paths of time through 'a period full two centuries long,' to its present state of perfection, we can fancy the amazement that might sit on his brow, as he contrasted the appearance of his little, shabbily printed 'weekly news' with the leviathans of the present day. We can imagine how rapidly his memory would flit back to the year of grace 1622, when James the First was king, and how he would recall the jibes and jeers, and prophecies of failure, that were levelled at him by the wits and pamphleteers, when he adopted the bold step of printing his 'newes' instead of writing it, as had been the previous mode of multiplying the chronicles of the time.

A newspaper editor must, like the poet, be born to his calling, as in the majority of instances no amount of training will fit a person for such a post unless he have a natural taste and aptitude for that description of literary labour; for although many persons are able to write 'leaders' or 'literary articles' for a newspaper, few can be intrusted with its editorial control, few can scent out the libel which lurks in almost every communication, few can distinguish the report intended to please the speaker instead of inform the nation, and the letters written to serve private interests instead of public ends; still fewer who can tell at a glance the kind of literary or political material which will promote the circulation of the journal—in fact, a good editor's great difficulty is not as to what he should put in but what he should keep out of his columns. Successful editors have not been great authors, but men of good common sense, and their good common sense has taught them to write but little themselves, but to read, judge, select, dictate, alter, and combine the writings of others.

The provincial press has now become, especially in the frequency of its issues, almost as great an institution as the press of London. Every large town has at least one daily journal; and in some cases, as in Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, three or four. In most instances, too, these 'dailies' are published at the price of one penny; and it is but just to say that many of them are conducted with great spirit and ability. The change from the old fivepenny or fourpenny journal is as yet so very recent as to partake somewhat of the character of novelty, and is by many still looked upon as a doubtful experiment. We all know, however, that, while we had only high-priced journals, the Americans had papers which sold even at so low a price as a half-penny, and that even on these the expenditure of capital was enormous. In New York, for instance, £50,000 was paid for the copyright and plant of a half-penny daily newspaper, with a circulation of 60,000 copies per day. It was printed by machinery, which threw off the impression at the rate of 18,000 copies an hour, and its advertisements yielded about £20,000 a year. It was at one time supposed that the cheap journal would not take root in our own country; and, as it was prophesied that penny-postage would fail, that railways would never supersede the old four-in-

hand, and that the electric telegraph would never become more than a scientific toy, so it was predicted that there never could be a successful penny newspaper. Already, notwithstanding, we have a penny paper (the *Manchester Examiner and Times*) announcing the acquisition of a machine capable of producing copies at the rate of 15,000 an hour. These, it must be admitted, are rather promising facts. This remarkable journal is understood to have a daily sale of 28,000. We lately purchased a copy of it, at nine o'clock in the morning of publication, at a railway station, midway between York and Hull, and found it to contain the same news as was in the *Times* of the same date!

So much for the outside or husk of the newspaper world. Let us now withdraw the curtain and peep behind the scenes upon the busy picture presented in the office of a largely circulating newspaper. See that gigantic machine, instinct with life, throwing off the printed sheets as quickly as the eye can count them. See the host of men, reminding us of a body of large ants, picking up tons of metal by half a penny-weight at a time. See the great intellectual head, the foremost man of all, the mighty 'we,' at whose frown potentates tremble and ministries dissolve, surrounded by his *aides* — the busy reporter new from his turn in 'the gallery,' industriously extending his notes; the sub-editor, condensing verbose communications, and extracting information and readable matter from a mountain of letters, blue-books, and country papers. See also how the post-office, the telegraph, and the train, rain a countless succession of communications upon the editorial table from all the corners of the earth. Look, there is a packet from 'our special correspondent,' who is tracking the steps of the British army in India; another, from our 'own' correspondent, who has been assisting to annihilate time and distance between Britain and America, by laying down an electric cable in the depths of the Atlantic; a third from a lively correspondent, who is dodging the foot-steps of royalty at the Cherbourg *fêtes*. Then, again, observe that active gentleman in the closely buttoned coat, who drops a letter into the communication-box and disappears: that is a 'penny-a-liner,' who has just gleaned the particulars of an exciting murder, perpetrated in the most mysterious manner; another liner has preceded him, with what he calls a capital suicide; and a third will follow, just as the paper is going to press, with a terrific conflagration accompanied by loss of life. The knowing sub-editor has in a few minutes revised, and (most necessary duty of all), abridged this 'copy,' and given it a corner in the paper, which consummates the competition of rival journals made necessary, when the article is of sufficient importance, as the liners have dropped copies into the letter-boxes of all the other daily papers.

A great London editor, according to Thomas Carlyle, gets up his leader in the following style: 'He rushes into the clubs, into London society, rolls about all day, copiously talking modish nonsense or sense, and listening to the like, with the multifarious miscellany of men; comes home at night, redacts it into a *Times* leader, and is found to have hit the essential purport of the world's immeasurable babblement. This is what the multifarious Babel sound did mean to say in clear words; this more nearly than anything else. Let the most gifted intellect, capable of writing epics, try to write such a leader for the morning newspaper.' The sub-editor, as we have already seen, has his own particular duties, and, on a daily paper, they are numerous and unceasing—piles of letters to wade through and select from, reports of all kinds to revise and adapt, proofs of letters from 'special' correspond-

ents in distant countries, requiring unprecedented geographical knowledge to look over and correct; and in many cases he has also the devising and carrying out of the details of the paper—deciding what must go in, and what must 'stand over till our next.' The reporter is a most important and useful auxiliary. By means of this individual the newspaper has come to perform a very important function, impossible to be rightly done without thorough freedom of statement; it is the 'channel of information between all classes in the country—it tells the country what the legislature and government are about, and the legislature and government what the country is about; it lets the rich and the poor know what is going forward beyond their own sphere.' In short, by means of editorial labour, aided by the energy of the reporter, the newspaper has become a political map of the country, as necessary to the statesman as a geographical map to the general. Some idea of what is required of a parliamentary reporter is given in a little work entitled *Aids to Reporting*. We are told therein, that the reporter must be naturally endowed with perceptive powers of a high order, and a faculty, which is by no means common, of transferring the current of thought which another person is endeavouring to express, and the process of reasoning by which he seeks to work out his conclusions, into his own mind. He must be able to understand, and for the time to feel, not merely what a man says, but what he means to say—things, with the most practised speakers, at times, and with young debaters, at all times, totally opposed to each other. He must be able so completely to identify himself with the course of an argument, as to know beforehand almost, not merely what the speaker is about to say, but the expressions he will or ought to employ to convey his meaning to others. As tending to the development and bringing out of this faculty, a study of the principles and practice of logic is a valuable assistance. Added to all these qualifications, great mechanical power in note-taking, and extraordinary rapidity in transcribing the notes into long-hand copy for the printer, are absolutely necessary. In aid of the note-taking power of the reporter, the acquisition of short-hand is of considerable importance; but it is by no means an imperative requisite, provided the reporter possesses, in an eminent degree, the higher qualifications of his calling. Some of the most distinguished reporters the gallery of parliament has known were long-hand writers, and there are at present two or three who report in long-hand with a power which enables them to follow a speaker with all but *verbatim* accuracy.'

While these editorial matters are in active progress, it must not be supposed that the 'business' affairs of the paper, conducted either by the proprietor himself, or his deputy the manager, are being neglected. None but such as have been regularly initiated into the mysteries of the newspaper world know the activity, the intense mental labour, or the foresight and unceasing energy that are required to insure the commercial prosperity of a first-rate journal. A person involved in the conducting of a high-class daily newspaper lives in a perpetual whirl of excitement, his existence being little else, from the 1st of January till the last day of December, than one continued worry. From morning to night he is obliged to be in harness, and at every person's command, never having one moment of the day he can call his own; his eye must be on all, and his active body everywhere. At one moment, he is deep in a confabulation with the party who is fitting up his new machine; at another he is arranging terms of agreement with a special correspondent who is required for India; now he has to complain of the

non-arrival of his new types, or the unpunctuality of the person who supplies him with ink; now he gets in a passion at an impudent 'liner' who has *done* the paper with an invented murder or a 'heart-rending suicide'; anon, a conference with the principal editor as to the line of writing to be taken up consequent on a change of ministry, demands his presence. Or the paper-maker has a woful tale to harass him with. His machinery has become deranged, and he has also unfortunately run out of rags in consequence of the shutting up of a foreign port; and so, with melancholy visage, he announces that there is only sufficient paper on hand to last three days, and that it will take four days to get his machinery put right, even if the rags should arrive in the meantime. Scarcely is this misfortune remedied than there comes an 'immediate' circular from the stamp-office, announcing that one of the securities, required by law for every paper, has grown timid, and has withdrawn his name, and that a substitute must be found before stamps can be obtained for the next paper. And so the day drags its slow length along, till wearied, worried, and headache'd, the poor manager hurries away home, to dinner. On the morrow, a similar routine of cares and anxieties is repeated, with similar expenditure of bodily and mental labour. These little annoyances, it may be stated, are only a tittle of what the proprietor has to endure—the efforts required to compete with other journals are alone sufficient to wear out his life in a very short time.

The reader will perhaps relish, by way of contrast, an account of the getting up of the humble journal of a fifth-rate county town, with its diffuse local paragraphs and minute market intelligence.

The week begins, in the country printing-office, with the distribution of the types of the preceding paper, a task which generally occupies about two days; the length of time required varying considerably in proportion to the extent of the general jobbing business carried on, for few country newspaper proprietors are independent of what is called the jobbing trade. The editor, sub-editor, and reporter, are, in most cases, one and indivisible in this kind of office; and he is engaged in the early part of the week in selecting literary extracts and other general 'matter,' to be used as circumstances admit. By the time the compositors are ready to take 'copy,' he has gleaned sufficient to keep them busy; and any original communications that may have been sent in, are then carefully read and revised by him, and selected or rejected, as the case may be.

Perhaps, while he is thus engaged, notice of the holding of some meeting or court is given him. Independent of the various courts and public meetings held in the town where the paper is issued, the editor-reporter is required to attend at similar meetings in various adjacent villages and towns, where no regular correspondent is appointed. Generally, however, there is in each of these little villages some rustic genius, ambitious of shining in all the glories of type and printer's ink; and he is only too glad to furnish accounts of all that transpires, and probably also to add his contributions to the 'original poetry' or 'original literature' department of the paper.

Besides the usual routine of reporting, all local occurrences, such as accidents, fires, &c., require the greatest attention, and have to be given very fully in the local columns. In many districts of the country, one of the greatest facilities of the reporter in obtaining such information, namely, the reports of police-officers of occurrences on their beats, is wanting; but this desideratum is commonly supplied by good-natured gossips, who take care to spread the news of the event far and wide, so that there is little chance of anything escaping the local editor. A great deal depends on the management of this department, as

the most requires to be made of every little occurrence, and all the large eggs, enormous gooseberries, and prolific potatoes, must be duly chronicled, as must also the births, deaths, and marriages of the surrounding neighbourhood.

In the general or political news department, the editor has a much easier duty to perform than his London brethren, as he has all the advantage of their labours. He does not require to think much or profoundly on political matters, as he makes use of the brains of the metropolitan editors for that purpose. His greatest efforts in the way of 'leaders' are on some local matter of vast importance, such as the shutting up of a roadway, the scarcity of coal, or the unpunctuality of the local post-office. The market intelligence must be copious and correct, as all the farmers for miles around depend upon it for the regulation of their sales. In conclusion, let us state, that the provincial editor is a great man in his district, *fêted* and feasted upon all occasions when there is a local gathering, and no farmers' dinner is complete without him. What wonderful presents he gets too—offerings of all kinds, the first-fruits of the season in all departments of growth. Take the following, which has just come under our notice, as an example: 'Mr James Spalding, gardener to Mrs Bethune, St Ann's Hill, sent us a dish of splendid peas on Saturday, the first we have seen this season. The previous day, Mr Blake, Castle Street, sent some very fine cauliflower. Yesterday, Mr Tennant, gardener, sent a basket of potatoes, all of very large size, with peas and strawberries of prime quality. Mr T. has been supplying potatoes for a week.'

In connection with the eight hundred journals which compose the newspaper press of Great Britain, there is of course a gigantic expenditure, and many trades are almost wholly supported by means of the 'fourth estate;' the typefounder, paper-maker, and ink-manufacturer, in particular, draw largely on the newspaper proprietors. If it were possible to present, in the aggregate, the sums paid to editors, sub-editors, managers, correspondents, leader-writers, reporters, reviewers of literature, science, the drama and music, besides compositors and machinists, we should find that, even in an economical point of view, the newspaper press is a great and important estate of the realm.

#### THE COMMISSARY OF POLICE.

FRANÇOIS DUMONTEL, a painter of Lyon, espoused, in the spring of 1843, Euphrosyne Lamont, a youthful damsel about his own age, and equally poor, enthusiastic, and unreflecting. Both were orphans; and Euphrosyne was a charming brunette, of local celebrity, whose dark southern eyes shone with such brilliancy as she emerged, a blushing bride, from the church of St Thomas, that the spectators were fain to acknowledge it was not surprising the young artist should have preferred the graceful and blooming Euphrosyne to middle-aged Mademoiselle Médard, the daughter and heiress of the rich silk-mercer in the Rue du Nord, whose sole attractions were *les beaux yeux de sa cassette*. The favour of this lady he was reported to have won by painting her portrait so cleverly, that although it was impossible not to recognise the likeness, the coarse, dry, parchment complexion, vixen eyes, and altogether crabbed aspect of the original, were so judiciously modified and softened, that a very pleasant *ensemble* resulted—an achievement which elicited from more than one shrewd observer the remark, that if François Dumontel were not the great genius he believed himself to be, he, at all events, possessed a skill in likeness-painting, which, diligently cultivated, could hardly fail of realising a fortune. Unfortunately, young Dumontel

looked down from the exaltation of his vanity with supreme contempt upon that branch of his art; his genius had wings for a far loftier flight, and next to Euphrosyne, the fame which could not fail to accrue from the exhibition in Paris of his great historic painting—a glittering mass of effulgent uniforms, fiery steeds, and crimson cannon-flashes upon a background of universal smoke, the fanciful representation of a battle in Algeria—lent brightness to the future, upon which, with love, beauty, youth, for his companions, he was now about to enter. Euphrosyne, herself a graceful flower-painter, as well as *artiste en fleurs*, participated the illusions of her lover and husband, but could not for all that repress a start and exclamation of alarm, when, on the evening of the seventh or eighth day of married life, François, who had been for some time profoundly immersed in money-calculations, said abruptly:

'It is plain, *ma belle*, that after paying for our places in the diligence, and the carriage of the picture, we shall have only about two hundred francs left when we reach Paris.'

'Two hundred francs! No more! Ah, François, that is a very small sum to begin the world with.'

'True, *mon amie*; but what then? Guguénard writes me that Vernet sold a picture decidedly inferior to mine, a short time since, for twelve thousand francs. Twelve thousand francs, Euphrosyne! If mine but fetches half that sum, it is already a fortune.'

'You know Guguénard, François, much better than I do, and have, I am aware, confidence in his judgment.'

'Entire confidence, Euphrosyne. Have you forgotten the compliment passed by Monsieur Le Vicomte de Parrans upon Henri Guguénard's the engraver's taste in the fine arts?'

'No; I remember it well, and that Guguénard was himself the relater of the anecdote.'

'Is not that a little ungenerous, Euphrosyne?'

'Perhaps so,' said the young wife, covering with an effort her natural gaiety of tone; 'and what is certain is, that I have full confidence in your genius and fortunes, François.'

The conversation thus terminated, Dumontel proceeded at once to the Messageries to secure places in the diligence, and Euphrosyne fell into a reverie, from which she was roused by the announcement of 'Monsieur Bouis,' and an elderly gentleman, in deep mourning, and wearing the ribbon of the Legion of Honour, presented himself. He was from Paris, and the sternly sad expression of his pale features was doubtless caused by the death, about three months previously, of his only son in an apparently motiveless duel with a French officer *en retraite*—Le Capitaine Regnau. The unfortunate young man had been on a prolonged visit at Lyon, at the time of the catastrophe, a circumstance well known to Euphrosyne, who appeared to be as much startled as surprised by the words 'Monsieur Bouis, of Paris.' The gentle mournfulness of his greeting, however, quickly reassured her.

'I am the father, mademoiselle—I beg pardon, Madame Dumontel, of the unfortunate Charles Bouis, who, I hope, still lives in your friendly remembrance.'

'Assuredly, monsieur,' replied Euphrosyne; 'and this notwithstanding my acquaintance with your amiable son was of the slightest kind.'

'So I understand,' said her visitor; 'and yet, but for that slight acquaintance, my son would now be alive.'

'Comment, monsieur?' exclaimed Euphrosyne, blushing and trembling; 'I do not comprehend.'

'Not clearly, you mean, my dear madame; but pray do not agitate yourself: a few words will explain my meaning, and justify, or, at least, excuse my presence here. During the night previous to the duel with Captain Regnau,' added M. Bouis, 'so inexplicable as

having arisen from the few sharp but meaningless words said to have provoked it, my son, foreboding it might be the last time he should address me upon earth, penned a long letter, which after his death was of course forwarded to me. It is only about a fortnight ago,' continued the speaker, with increasing emotion, sternly as he strove to preserve a simulated stoicism of tone and manner, 'that I found courage to open and read it. One paragraph alone related to you, madame; a brief one, but written with a hand which trembled more at those few lines than all the rest, informed me that he had passionately loved the beautiful *orpheline* of the Grande Rue, Lyon, Euphrosyne Lamont, *artiste en fleurs*; but chiefly from knowing that I would not consent to the alliance, had never disclosed his passion to the said Euphrosyne—in words, of course, is meant,' added M. Bouis, 'as it is scarcely possible that a sentiment so vivid should not have found interpretation, though that of the lips was withheld.'

'Have the kindness, monsieur,' said Madame Dumontel, 'to confine yourself to what it is needful I should hear. For the rest,' she added, with a slight tinge of pride, 'a young woman *bien élevée*, and well taught and nurtured, does not permit herself to interpret the demeanour of young gentlemen in whose society she may chance to find herself.'

'Excuse me, madame; I would not willingly offend you. I have, however, a few more words to say. Le Capitaine Regnau was, I have reason to believe, keener sighted than you, and he, moreover, I am informed, greatly admired Mademoiselle Euphrosyne Lamont, declared his preference, and was repulsed—contemptuously repulsed.'

'Monsieur Bouis,' said Euphrosyne, rising and speaking with vehemence, 'this is extreme impertinence on your part. Forgive me,' she added, quickly checking herself; 'you have, I recognise, a privilege of grief as well as of age, justifying remarks that from others would be intolerable. I can appreciate, moreover, the motive of this questioning. Well, then, sir, the current report you speak of is not precisely correct. Monsieur Le Capitaine Regnau insulted Euphrosyne Lamont, and was by her indignantly spurned and defied. That is the simple truth.'

'And this was known to my son?'

'I cannot speak positively as to that, but I have sometimes feared it may have been so.'

'And that that knowledge, conjoined with Regnau's surmise that Charles might prove a formidable rival, infused venom into the else slightly irritating words that passed between them at the Café Royal?'

'I can only repeat, monsieur, that I fear it may have fallen out as you suggest.'

M. Bouis seemed to reflect for a short time, and then resuming with greater vivacity, said: 'In the presence of so much frankness, madame, I cannot choose but be equally sincere and open. I have been, as you may perhaps have heard, a *commissaire de police*, in the department of the Seine et Oise, residing usually at Versailles, and only lately at Paris, where I am not much known. A considerable succession that fell to me not very long since—of slight value in my estimation now—enabled me to retire from the service—with honour, madame, as the decoration I wear assures you. I have not, however, lost the craft of my profession in abandoning its exercise; and my chief purpose in visiting Lyon was to satisfy myself of the truth or falsehood of a rumour that had reached me, to the effect that Charles had met with foul play at the hands of Regnau—a villain who had before three murders, by duel, on his head.'

'And he glories, I have heard, in those frightful crimes,' interjected Euphrosyne with a shudder; 'but the day of retribution will surely arrive for him.'

'At the hour when I fully satisfy myself that my boy was unfairly dealt with—apart from Regnaud's practised skill with the small sword, which itself converts such encounters into a means of legal assassination—that day, be assured, madame, will have dawned for his slayer. I am now entering upon this duel, as it may fairly be called, with Regnaud, and I foresee, Madame Dumontel, that you will be in a greater or less degree instrumental in bringing about the catastrophe.'

'Me, monsieur! You jest surely.'

'On the contrary, I am perfectly serious. Regnaud is not one to relinquish easily a base purpose; and he, I know, leaves Lyon to-morrow by the same diligence as yourself and Monsieur Dumontel for Paris. He would follow you to the world's end, to avenge the wound you have inflicted on his vanity.'

*avenge the wound you have inflicted on his vanity.*  
‘*Mon Dieu, can it be possible!*’ exclaimed Euphrosyne with much emotion; ‘*but it is not possible, monsieur. Le Capitaine Regnaud’s pretended passion was a fleeting caprice, nothing more.*’

'That may be; but I am not the less convinced that you, or your facile-tempered husband—madame will excuse my frankness—will require, and not long, first, protection or redress against his machinations. Either or both will be readily afforded you by me, upon application at the address inscribed upon this card. And now, madame, with many thanks for your complaisance, adieu, though but for a short time only, I am pretty confident. Meanwhile, you will not refuse acceptance of this trifle from Charles Bouïs's childless father; it is a *souvenir* from the tomb.'

He was gone, and upon opening the paper placed in her hand, Euphrosyne found it contained a note of the Bank of France for one thousand francs.

As M. Bouis predicted, Captain Regnaud did in fact quit Lyon by the same diligence as the Dumontels, and he, Regnaud, rightly concluding that his duellist reputation would deter Euphrosyne from hinting anything to her husband which might lead to a quarrel, openly courted the artist's acquaintance during the journey, and so successfully, that upon taking leave of each other at the bureau of the diligence, Paris, a meeting at the *Rucher Cancale* was arranged between them, without the knowledge of the wife, for the next day but one.

The Dumontels settled themselves temporarily in lodgings at Numéro 9, Grande Rue Verte, near the Pont Neuf; and but a few weeks elapsed before the ambitious aspirations of the self-deceived artist were utterly dissipated, not only by the judgment of competent critics, but his own, which, enlightened by comparing his work with those of masters in the art, was fain to admit that whatever genius or aptitude he might possess, long and severe study in the mechanical part of painting must be undergone before he could hope to realise worthily upon canvas the crude idealisations with which his brain throbbed and sparkled. François Dumontel was incapable of resigning himself to the laborious self-discipline required; with the collapse of his soaring visions, the little mental energy he possessed abandoned him; and he yielded, almost without resistance, but not without remorse, to the seductions of his now intimate friend, Captain Regnaud, by whom he was introduced, first to the wine-shops, next to the gaming-tables of Paris. His 1200 francs were early squandered in those orgies; and two months after her arrival in Paris, Euphrosyne learned from the lips of her husband, rendered frantic by the utterly desperate circumstances in which he was involved, that their last franc was gone, his painting pledged at the Mont de Piété, and that he had, besides, incurred debts of honour to Captain Regnaud, amounting to more than a hundred Napoleons, for which he had given

promissory-notes at short dates, one whereof would fall due on the following day. One may imagine the shock of this revelation to poor Euphrosyne, who had been in some way completely blinded to the nature of her husband's pursuits during his long absences from home; but she was of a courageous, elastic temperament, and soon rallying from the blow, all the more quickly that the recollection of M. Bouis's words and promise flashed hopefully upon her mind, she was, before an hour had passed, on her way to that gentleman's house, armed with a written statement of her husband's liabilities, and his solemn promise, that if extricated from the ruin he had brought upon himself and wife, he would never enter a gaming-house again, nor as long as he lived pollute his hands with the touch of dice or cards.

M. Bouis was at home, and Euphrasyne was immediately ushered into his presence. He looked much older and sadder than when she last saw him; but he was unchanged towards herself, judging by his kind recognising smile, and the good-will with which he took her trembling hand and pressed it with both his.

'Be seated, Madame Dumontel,' he said; 'I can guess the purport of your visit pretty well; but let me hear it from your own lips.'

Euphrosyne complied as well as her agitation and embarrassment would permit, and finished by placing the memorandum drawn up by her husband in the hand of her attentive auditor. M. Bouis glanced over it, and presently said: 'The amount required is a considerable one, but—and his eyes were for a moment raised to a full-length portrait of his son—'you were commanded to my kind offices by that poor murdered boy, and I will not fail you in this strait. You shall take the money with you, and a moderate sum besides—'

'Ah, monsieur,' broke in the weeping wife, 'you are too good—too generous.'

'And a moderate sum besides,' continued M. Bouis, 'which will enable your husband to prosecute his studies, if he be sincere in his vows of amendment. But let him perfectly understand,' added that gentleman with severe emphasis, 'that I do this, and will yet further assist him, upon condition only that he never again plays or associates with Regnaud, and especially that he never again accepts bills or obligations for him or any other person on any pretext whatever. Can I, madame, reckon upon your husband's rigorous fulfilment of these terms?'

'Oh, certainly, monsieur,' sobbed Euphrasyne. 'François has been imprudent, thoughtless, but his heart, believe me, is uncorrupted; the promise he has given, together with the pledge you require, will be sacredly kept.'

'Enough, my dear madame,' said Monsieur Bouis, with respectful kindness. 'There is a draft for the amount required. One moment,' he added, as Euphrosyne was leaving the room; 'your husband's promissory-notes have, I happen to know, been discounted by Lemaire, No. 12 Rue Favard; you can therefore withdraw them without Regnault's intervention, or waiting till they are presented for payment. Au revoir, madame: I shall call and see your husband one of these days.'

About six weeks after this occurrence, and rather late in the evening, a middle-aged man entered an estaminet in the Faubourg St Antoine, and bade the attendant *garçon* inform Captain Regnaud, if he was called, that his friend Gabriel was waiting for him in the back-room. Gabriel was, it is true, the name given to this person by his acquaintance, though it was shrewdly suspected by at least one of them, in consequence of some half-revelations made under the influence of wine, that he was no other than a certain Jacques Le Maitre, an escaped *foucat*, who, by means

of a luxuriant black wig, whiskers, moustaches, and beard, and altogether artistic make-up, with the further precaution of never leaving his den, wherever that might be, till after night-fall, had hitherto managed to evade the vigilance of the Paris police. Evidently from his sometimes gloomily preoccupied, and at other times restless, unquiet demeanour, an individual at odds with the settled order of the world, and on this particular evening he seemed more than usually nervous and impatient, which was not surprising, a full hour having passed before Captain Regnaud, himself in a state of great mental disquietude, and flustered, moreover, with drink, entered the small dingy apartment.

'Ah, there you are, sacré night-owl,' exclaimed Regnaud, seizing as he spoke the wine ordered, but untouched, by Gabriel, and swallowing it at a draught. 'If I could have seen you two hours since, I were now eight hundred francs richer than I am.'

'Eight hundred francs in two hours is *gros jeu*', remarked Gabriel.

'Yes; I played high and madly. In fact, Gabriel, my friend,' continued the captain, 'my affairs, as I have before hinted to you, are just now in an awkward state; nevertheless, with your promised assistance, clever coquin that you are, all may yet be well.'

'Lemaire, then, will take my promissory-note in lieu of that you are so eager to get out of his hands?'

'Not he, the villain! On the contrary, he plainly hints his opinion, and therein, *entre nous*, I agree with him—that my friend Gabriel has half-a-dozen aliases—all names well known to messieurs the police, but not worth a sou upon a bill.'

'That remains to be proved, Monsieur le Capitaine. In the meantime, what is to be done?'

'That, my friend, is the question. In the first place, then, one thousand francs, well-nigh all I am possessed of, shall, in case of success, be yours. Ah, that, in your opinion, is speaking to the purpose! Eh, Gabriel?'

'No doubt. I must, however, know without reservation exactly how the said thousand francs are to be earned. I know that such a sum cannot be had for nothing; still, I must know all the whys and wherefores of the business before I engage in it.'

'Quite right; I expected no less from your experience and knowledge of the world. Know, then, I am about to confide in your discretion, as I certainly would not in the oath of Monseigneur the Archbishop of Paris, or of his Holiness the Pope; and for these plain reasons, my friend—firstly, that you would as lief hang yourself as appear before a magistrate for any purpose whatever; secondly, that if you did so appear, your evidence would not be worth the breath with which it was uttered. You see I am candour itself.'

'Precisely. Well?'

'This, then, is the exact situation. But first order in some brandy. You remember, Gabriel,' the captain went on to say, as soon as the brandy was placed upon the table, and his companion had resumed his seat, but in such a position that his countenance could only be partially seen where Regnaud sat—'you remember that, about a week after that poor devil of an artist of the Grande Rue Verte so unexpectedly paid his debts, and turned saint, I had a run of ill-luck, and that Lemaire—confound him!—would not lend me a franc without the security of my friend Dumontel, who had taken up his former acceptances in so satisfactory a manner. Well, I knew, of course, that my friend François Dumontel would not lend me his signature to save me from perdition; and so—and so,' added Captain Regnaud, gulping down another glass of brandy, 'finding there was no help for it, and confident that

I should be able to retire the note before the month expired, I—I—you understand?'

'Not exactly.'

'No! then my brain is duller than that flashing eye of yours. I mean that I signed the name of François Dumontel without its owner's consent.'

'In plain French, that you forged François Dumontel's signature to a bill for five thousand francs?'

'Just that. Well, Lemaire now refuses to renew it, even if half, as I offered yesterday, were paid down, or take any other security I can get in its place; and it is due in four days.'

'*Morbleu*, but that is embarrassing. I see nothing for it but flight, or—or blowing Dumontel's brains out—legally, of course.'

'Thou art a shrewd rascal, Gabriel,' exclaimed Regnaud with vivacity. 'Flight happens to be out of the question, and if nothing better can be done, I must boldly outface the matter, swear the signature is genuine: the imitation, I can answer for it, is perfect, and Dumontel's former acceptances in my favour will naturally give force and colour to my assertion. That course would nevertheless be a dangerous one; and the other expedient you have suggested strikes me as the safest, surest plan.'

'It struck me that you might provoke Dumontel to a duel, and slay him. You are an adept, I have heard, at that game.'

'You have heard aright; but there are cogent reasons why I should not fight him. In the first place, if he should escape with life, which, however, is not likely, the affair of the bill of exchange would have an ugly look. Next, to kill him would damage me irretrievably with his charming widow, whose good graces I do not yet despair of winning; so that, in brief, Gabriel, if you would earn the thousand francs, you must fight and kill Dumontel yourself.'

'I! Bah! you rave!'

'Perfectly sane, if not precisely sober, I assure you, friend Gabriel. What objection have you?'

'What objection? Come, that's pleasant! To begin with, then, he is, you have told me, a good fencer, so that I should have an excellent chance of receiving, instead of a thousand francs, six inches of cold steel for my share of the bargain.'

'Tut, tut! There is no risk of that. You shall pink him without the slightest risk to yourself, as I have already four in my lifetime; the last a far smarter fellow than Dumontel—one Charles Bouis of Lyon—What ails thee?'

'A sharp spasm, that's all; pass the brandy.'

'The expedient,' continued Regnaud in compliance with his companion's gesture, 'is as simple as it is safe. I will provide you a *just-au-corps*, or under-shirt, fitting close to the body; so flexible, and otherwise artistically manufactured, that though impenetrable by the keenest sword-point, it cannot, except by the closest, minutest examination, be distinguished from plain flannel. After throwing off your coat, you will open the vest above the *just-au-corps*, before engaging, to shew that all is above board, and the affair is as good as finished—your man as safely and certainly spitted as a fowl.'

Gabriel was some time before he made up his mind to accept Regnaud's atrocious proposal; but at last he said: 'Well, the venture is worth trying by a fellow so out of elbows as I am. Where can I meet with this Dumontel?'

'At Bichard's, the restaurant, not far from the Louvre. He dines there most evenings between five and six o'clock. He is of the true southern breed, and therefore easily provoked.'

'And the thousand francs?'

'Five hundred at starting for the Bois de Boulogne, and five upon returning—successful.'

'It is a bargain; and now I must begone, for this confounded colic increases upon me, and I must procure some more potent remedy than brandy.'

'Good evening, Gabriel. The thousand francs, depend upon it, are as safely yours as if already pouched.'

Le Capitaine Regnaud slept soundly at daybreak the next morning, his head glued to the pillow by the strong potations of the previous evening; nevertheless awake he must and did under the infliction of the shouts and shakings of some half-a-dozen gendarmes; and cloudy, mystified as were his wine and sleep oppressed senses, he was soon made to comprehend that he, Jules Regnaud, ci-devant Capitaine de Chasseurs, was on his way to prison, charged with the grave crime of having forged the signature of François Dumontel to a bill of exchange for five thousand francs.

The Cour d'Assises of the Seine, before which Regnaud was arraigned, was in session the next week but one. Various formalities having been gone through, the previously sworn testimony of Lemaire, that he discounted the bill for the accused, and that of François Dumontel, that he had not signed it, nor authorised any one else to do so, was repeated in open court—the accused, who had recovered all his audacity, frequently interrupting the last witness by questions and assertions, tending to shew that he, Dumontel, had given the bill, as he had former ones, in discharge of a gambling debt.

'Listen to me, Regnaud,' said the president. 'You are acquainted, it appears, with one Gabriel?'

The accused appeared to baffle for a moment; but recovering himself, said boldly: 'Yes; I know there is such a fellow, an escaped forçat, I had latterly reason to suspect, and I in consequence kicked him out of an estaminet.'

'An estaminet in the Faubourg St Antoine?'

'Yes—no; I do not precisely remember, Monsieur le Président.'

'Did you not confess to him that you had forged François Dumontel's name to this bill for five thousand francs?'

'Never. If he has said so, it is a vile invention to be revenged upon me. And of what worth, Monsieur le Président, let me ask, is the testimony of an escaped forçat, which I contend Gabriel to be?'

'Did you tell him that you possessed a curiously contrived just-au-corps, or undercoat, impenetrable by pistol-ball or sword-thrust, by means of which you had been enabled to safely slay four persons in pretended duels?'

'Never! It is all, I insist, a hideous calumny,' replied the prisoner, but now ghastly pale, and with much diminished confidence.

'It is certain, nevertheless, Regnaud, that such an article has been found at your lodgings. You have other witnesses, Monsieur le Procureur-général; let them be examined.'

'Yes, le Sieur Bouis, ancien commissaire de police, and member of the Legion of Honour.'

'Accused,' said the president, whilst the huissier was gone in quest of the witness, 'do you know the Sieur Bouis?'

'No, Monsieur le Président.'

'Look at the witness,' continued the president, indicating M. Bouis, who had entered the court, dressed in deep mourning, and wearing, as usual, his ribbon, 'and say if you persist in that answer.'

'Yes—no, that is—' stammered Regnaud, upon whose forehead large drops of perspiration suddenly broke out.

'You are not quite sure. The witness will refresh your memory.'

With quick dexterity, M. Bouis assumed a black wig, whiskers, and moustaches, and turning fiercely

towards the accused, exclaimed: 'Now, villain, do you know me?'

'Gabriel!' shrieked the accused, surprised out of all self-control—'I am lost!'

There could be no doubt of that; and ten minutes had not passed before Jules Regnaud was convicted and sentenced to the galleys for life—the president expressing his regret that he could not be punished capitally for the murders by duel he had confessed to have committed. He was sent with the next chain-gang to Brest, where he survived this his fifth and last duel, though not fought with sword or pistol, about two years only. I have not been able to discover any further trace of the fortunes of François and Euphrosyne Dumontel, or of the ex-commissary of police, Bouis.

#### CONFIDENCE IN BIG-LOOKING PEOPLE.

This is a thing to which there is a great tendency amongst mankind. It is, we fear, the nature of the creature. If, however, there be any exceptive persons who are not inclined to rest satisfied with appearances and authorities, but feel that getting at solid facts is on the whole preferable, let them think of the directors of the Western Bank of Scotland, and be confirmed in their preference. On the 18th of November last—ten days or so after the stoppage of that bank—its directors reported to a meeting of its depositors, through their interim-manager, Mr J. S. Fleming, that it had assets in bills, balances on cash accounts, government securities, &c., to the extent of £9,398,184, being an excess of £1,726,543 over its liabilities, 'so that losses to the extent of a million and three-quarters, must have been, or must yet be sustained, before the creditors of the bank require to go beyond the proper company assets, to seek for payment of their claims.' We give the directors credit for making this statement, in perfect assurance that no such losses had been incurred, far less anything more considerable: they knew no better at the time; but how has the matter turned out? Four speculative firms in Glasgow had received advances to the amount of £1,603,728, a hundred thousand pounds more than the entire capital of the bank, and of these debts one half will never be recovered—there will be only one shilling a pound in one case, and two shillings in another. It takes the whole capital, and is calculated to require £1,421,948 more to liquidate the bank's obligations. Of this state of things, as appears from the parliamentary evidence of the above-named Mr Fleming, the directors, meeting weekly in their parlour to look over a statement of affairs, were profoundly ignorant. So far back as 1853, £261,000 of ascertainedly irrecoverable bills were exhibited in the accounts as assets; yet of this the directors never became informed. The difference in the exchanges against the bank—the grand test of the soundness of a bank's business—was for some years at an average of three millions; yet the directors appear to have not known, or at least not regarded it. An appalling amount of the dangerous kind of business called re-discounting was done; yet it never awoke a fear in the directors. The whole system of business pursued—the extending of large 'facilities' to trading firms conducting huge undertakings on the most unsound principles—was bad, and could not but end in ruin; yet the directors dreamed on. More surprising still—assuming that they were in good faith in assigning dividends of 9 per cent., they must have been under an impression

that the concern was flourishing. Only one man—the manager—enjoyed the opportunity of acquainting himself with the real state of the bank; and it is questionable how far even he knew of it. Here, then, is a vast concern, inferring the bottomless pit of unlimited liability to thirteen hundred shareholders, going on for years under an appearance of sound and judicious direction—rich men, clever men of business, for its directors—its shares at 60 per cent. above par—the community everywhere trusting and depending upon it—and yet there was not, all the time, as much care taken to ascertain its real condition, and come to a true outward statement of the same, as we might expect from a committee of third-form boys, had such been set to conduct it. O big-wigs, hide for ever those bushy, but borrowed locks, cover those jolly faces with the palms of repentant shame! What shams ye have been!

My simple Public—ignorant yourself, anxious for good interest on your spare funds, much meditating on share-lists, prone to walk in the light of some godly name held out for your veneration, or to jump dikes because others have jumped before you—ponder well on this shewing of the possible extent of ignorant trust in those at the head of great concerns. Only bethink you as to that smooth, pleasant annual report that has been brought forward, moved, seconded, and adopted, and as to that seven or eight per cent. of dividend which is to be dealt out to you, what a temptation all of those in charge are under, from the manager downwards, to keep up the price of the shares in the market! No check on this temptation, mind you; so, for anything you can tell, there may be no end of bad debts hopefully assumed as good—half your means may be out on adventure, for which happy issue is not to be looked for. Think of your own insidious inclination to take a sanguine view, your wish for a better dividend, your horror of anything that can sink the price of shares; and see in these things the danger in which the truthfulness—or let us rather say explicitness—of your managers lies. Then, try to get an examination made by external unconcerned parties, even though it may create a little of a ‘downward tendency’ at first. Get at facts somehow; know the best and the worst of it, and for the time coming dream in peace.

#### PORLTAND IN SEPTEMBER 1858.

Look at that beautiful island, with the bluest of blue seas beyond its rose-tinted headlands, and connect it if you can with ideas of crime. Impossible! Yet, at this moment, as I gaze upon it from the South Downs, Portland is a convict prison, where fifteen hundred human beings, each more or less guilty, are undergoing their appointed terms of penal servitude.

This was my reflection as I stood last week looking down, from the range of hills which command a view of Weymouth Bay, upon the graceful island—most picturesque when seen from that exact point—and remembered the chained gang of ruffians whom I had seen half an hour before at the railway station, throwing themselves down on the platform, and refusing to stir until forcibly compelled to enter the vans, in which, yelling like demons, cursing and screeching, they were to be conveyed to their destination.

What would the good old king, whose image is cut on the face of the chalk down to my left hand, have thought of such a desecration? The figure represents George III., on horseback, as he used to ride, unweariedly, tiring out his hungry esquires, and startling quiet gentlefolks out of their tranquillity by his hurried unceremonious visits to their country-seats. It is still kept clear of weeds, and is plainly

visible on the side of the hill that rises in bold gorse-crowned sweeps and grassy curves above the valleys of Preston and Osmington. I could fancy the old king energetically questioning Colonel Goldsworthy: ‘Eh, what! how is this? Convicts—eh? Put them somewhere else; Weymouth is my royal watering-place. What, what, what—find another jail, can’t you? Why shouldn’t you? Another prison, I say, for the poor wretches. I like to enjoy myself at the sea-side.’

Alas! the good monarch, whose memory is still revered by the inhabitants of Weymouth and Melcombe-Regis, is no longer able to guard his Sans Souci. The bold Portlanders are now compelled to tolerate the evil they cannot cure. My eye, as I look seaward, runs over the long rows of lodging-houses along the beach at Weymouth, the tent-like bathing-machines, the *Blenheim*, anchored in Weymouth Roads, the yachts and sailing-vessels passing to and fro there, and rests upon the white walls of the convict prison.

Nearer to me, the high ground on which I stand is scooped out, and falls abruptly, making a smooth green circus, whose steep walls darken the course of a stream which has its source at the foot of the hill. The water gushes from the bank, and forms a quiet pool, overhung by two or three trees and some blackberry and alder bushes. Green rushes and flags, of which the pods are opening and shewing bright scarlet seeds, bend over the head of the spring, and fringe its course, which you can trace by the greener hue of the grass, and here and there a shining gleam, as it glides past a secluded hamlet and through watermeadows to the sea, which it enters after passing through sand and shingle.

This little hill-stream furnishes a supply of water to the town, and there are great wheels constantly at work, and subterranean arches and chambers, into which the water is pumped, and thence conveyed by underground pipes to Weymouth. At one time, a great drought left Portland prison destitute of water, and the necessary supply was taken daily by a steamer in casks from the cove where Preston Brook runs into the sea.

But I cannot stand for ever on these downs looking seaward; I must convince myself that busy life is stirring yonder, heaving in the heart of that rocky fastness, which is intended at some future day to rival the French emperor’s last toy—to be our English Cherbourg. Two years hence, the breakwater, that mighty bulwark against the force of the western ocean, is to be finished; but it is more difficult to predict when the fortifications on the island will be completed, and batteries mounted on Ratcliffe Head and the Nothe.

The band of the Wexford militia was playing on the esplanade at Weymouth as I entered the town. Regular Irish boys were the musicians, with handsome frolicsome faces, and rolling eyes, that glanced boldly at the ladies in sombreros and hats of every description who thronged the walk. Gay bonnets and light summer muslin mantles and dresses mingled with rough jackets of cloth and waterproof capes and cloaks calculated to defend the wearers from rain and the salt sea-spray. I walked on shore at the landing-place near the breakwater.

I had heard, in passing through the town, that the convicts had organised a mutiny, but that it had been promptly defeated. The Wexford militia, though but a small force, had held their own; and the scheme laid by the prisoners, to make use of their working-tools, murder their warders, and, after plundering and burning the villages, to escape to the mainland, had providentially been crushed in its birth. The presence of the *Blenheim* in the harbour gave confidence to the authorities, who all did their duty admirably.

The ship's guns were shotted, and one of them was ready to be sent on shore at a moment's notice.

It is worth while to pause and consider what a fearful calamity it would have been if these criminals, with powerful weapons in their hands, had broken loose—if the small armed force had proved insufficient. Notice had been received beforehand of the plot. Each man was at his post; and the greatest credit is due to all concerned, from Captain Gambier and Captain Clay, to the raw lads fresh from bog and mountain, who faithfully and unflinchingly executed their behests. But had it been otherwise, supposing the convicts had kept their secret better, or one individual had failed in discretion or courage, what an amount of wickedness and misery might have ensued! As I looked at the narrow strait which connects Portland with the mainland, and imagined a horde of armed and ferocious felons making their way across it, I longed to point out the advisability, when such costly preparations were being made to avert a distant and perhaps imaginary danger, of erecting a fort to command this passage.

My companion, an officer stationed at Weymouth, shewed me the formidable preparations which are to result in turning Portland into a second Gibraltar. After our tour of inspection of these and the break-water was over, we visited the quarries where stone was being hewn by the convicts.

"There may be an outbreak at any moment," he said; "but we are prepared. Only if you dislike seeing a row, you had better not come further."

I told him that I wished to see everything, and we went on together.

There had been great excitement all that day. In the morning, a most determined preconcerted assault had been made, but the Wexford boys were under arms and all ready. At the first attack upon the warders—most of whom are splendid-looking men, decked with Crimean medals—soldiers started forth from behind every projecting angle of stone; and every attempt to join forces on the part of the convicts was frustrated.

To a certain extent, the same thing was still going forward. More than once, we heard the shrill call of the bugle. The only difficulty the Irishmen felt was in keeping from firing. With wild cheering they rushed down, charging with fixed bayonets upon the wretched felons, who never stood their ground for a moment, but were marched off sullenly to sheds and hovels, where they were kept in durance till their punishment was administered by the boatswain of the *Blenheim*. One of the convicts, after bearing the lash with obstinate endurance, merely said: "You've earned your breakfast, I reckon, this morning."

After watching more than one of these attempted outbreaks, we visited the prison, where all was quiet. The most admirable management prevailed; and the convicts did not, generally speaking, as they came in from labour, appear to me to bear the marks of crime on their countenances.

The diet seemed not overabundant, but sufficient; and the hospital for the sick opened into a rocky garden, in which the convalescents were permitted to work. This favoured spot was on the bold brow of the cliff, commanding a splendid prospect. The White Nothe, St Albans Head, Kimeridge Ledge, Durdle Door, Lulworth, Ringstead, Osmington Mills, and the little cove to which I had traced the course of Preston Brook, rose out of a sea azure as the Mediterranean. Above my head flew white-winged gulls, free as the winds that bore them over the dismal scene of captivity.

The spiritual wants of the prisoners are supplied by the ministration of an excellent chaplain, who told me that until seized by a sudden impression that they were being dealt with unjustly, their conduct was,

generally speaking, orderly. Many of them bore good-conduct stripes on their sleeves; and their countenances brightened when they were addressed and congratulated upon them. One man turned his head away, shunning my gaze, which was rather sought by the rest. He was keeping the accounts of the jail, and bent over his writing. This was Sir John Dean Paul, who is said to have encouraged and incited the prisoners to mutiny. How far this may be true, I cannot tell, but I heard it confidently asserted. His own term of imprisonment, he avers, ought now to be over, if justice were rendered him, as the punishment for the crime which he committed is only three years' penal servitude by the recent act, whereas the one under which he was condemned appointed a longer period. It is curious that the question of legal rights should be thus fiercely agitated among fettered criminals, who, by their evil deeds, have outraged the laws. This is a new feature in the history of crime, and yet it does not seem out of keeping with the excellent arrangements of that model prison, its admirable rules and regulations, strict discipline, and the hopes held out to the better disposed of the convicts.

There is no truth in the assertion that the half-famished Dorsetshire peasant envies the occupants of that stately jail. He may say that the prisoner is better fed and more warmly clothed than many an honest labourer; he may murmur at his own lot when old age or sickness comes upon him; but no free man covets the garb and diet of a convicted felon. Nor is there need of more than one searching glance at the sunken countenances of the prisoners to shew that no food is sweet that is doled out by the hand of a jailer. It may be that the bread baked at the Portland prison is better than that which is served by many a London baker to his customers. I tasted it, and pronounce it excellent; and all the stores of provisions seemed the best of their kind, and the quantity sufficient for nutriment; but there is no excess. You must not starve caged birds; but will they find the water as sweet which they have to get at through interstices between gilded bars, as the rippling streamlet beside whose course they have perched on waving sprays? Will the contents of their tray of seed be as pleasant to their taste as the scarlet hips and haws, or the spoils of the garden in which they flew saucily in freedom from tree to tree?

By permission, I was present at the evening-service in the chapel, and I heard with emotion the voices of the convicts rising in prayer. The psalms chosen were of a penitential character, and sounded to me as the wail of the accursed spirits might have done, cast down from heaven with Lucifer. There seemed to be a smothered, but intensely passionate mingling of sorrow and indignation in the tones of the men nearest to me. Some of their accents were polished and cultivated, others rough and untutored, when separately distinguished; but rising and falling together like the sea-waves, full of the roar of a gathering tempest.

The service was soon over, and I left the grounds of the prison immediately afterwards. The view from the summit of the heights above the beach was excessively wild and curious. The village of Chesil lay below—stone cottages with high-pointed roofs, destitute of eaves, so that the rough winds found no salient ledges to assail; the grand curve of the West Bay outside the great pebble ridge, marked by a white line of surf; here and there a light shone in a fishing-bark, and I could just mark where the tall tower of Wyke Church rose against the gray moonless sky. The esplanade at Weymouth was one glowing line of brightness, contrasted with the dark heaving waters of the bay and the dusky headlands. Westward, a strange star seemed to

confront me menacingly bright and beautiful. Can it be that yonder great orb is millions of miles away? It is the comet of 1858, with its magnificent fan-like tail and brilliant eye of light. Myriads of stars are coming out now, as my eyes grow accustomed to the darkness; but it resembles none of them. It has its own grand majestic aspect, which reminds me of the time when such a portent sun in the heavens was considered as bringing war and desolation in its train. Truly, we have had enough of war and bloodshed since the last fiery messenger of wrath swept across our skies.

And now my brief holiday is past—that rest for which the London professional man longs during one part of his busy year, and regrets during another. But I shall carry back to my chambers refreshing recollections of that dark blue sea, of those breezy gorse-covered heights, with their great flocks of black-faced grazing sheep, of that bare rock sitting so proudly on the waters, like a couchant lion, and of the hospitable and warm-hearted west-country folks.

Of these, there are many in Dorsetshire, though it is not a thickly populated county; and there is a cordial life in their country-houses which warms the heart like the ring of the cheery note of their hunting-horns, the solemn music of their sea, and the land-breeze that sweeps unimpeded over their trackless downs.

#### THE BOGWOOD FIRE.

SEVERAL years ago there appeared in an Irish newspaper the first fit or canto of a poem, entitled *The Monks of Kilcrea*. Though short and fragmentary, it excited much notice at the time both in Ireland and England. A French gentleman, M. le Chevalier de Chatelain, was so struck by the beauty of the poetry that he immediately made a translation of it, and, through the editor of the newspaper, transmitted it to the author, who remained, and still remains, unknown. Afterwards, at long intervals, a second and a third canto saw the light; and notwithstanding several bad rhymes, implying an almost total want of acquaintance with poetry as an art, and a very bad ear besides, displayed so much invention, so much power of imagination, so rich and vivid a fancy, and so deep a sympathy for all that is beautiful in nature, that had the author come before the public in a poetical age, he would have earned for himself a high reputation. But when all the cantos were collected and published by Mr M'Glashan in Dublin, the volume, to borrow David Hume's celebrated phrase, seems to have fallen still-born from the press.

The French translator of the first canto appears fully determined, however, that our Celtic fellow-countryman shall not be suffered to drop quietly into oblivion. He has therefore made a version of the whole poem, which has just been published. M. de Chatelain is well known as a translator; we ourselves have spoken of his merits more than once—his Gay and Chaucer are popular both in England and on the continent; but nothing he had previously done could have prepared the public for what he has now accomplished in *The Monks of Kilcrea*.

The scene of the poem is laid far back in history, when the house of Lancaster fought its brilliant battles on the continent, and almost broke up the foundations of English society, in order to precipitate half the nation upon France. Ireland, at that time, was a social and political chaos. In its capital, the Saxon reigned predominant; Norman barons possessed castles here and there throughout the land; while large districts, we might almost say provinces, remained in the hands of native chiefs, engaged in perpetual dissensions, and making way, by mutual slaughter, for the triumph of the common foe. In

many parts, the country was little better than a wilderness: the bogs were undrained; rivers were not spanned by bridges; the mountains and glens were densely overgrown with forest; and wild beasts, especially wolves, visited the glimpses of the moon, making night hideous. Monasteries in such an age were not only an advantage, but a necessity. They were created by society because society wanted them; they were to our forefathers what the caravansary is to travellers in the east—places where the way-worn, the houseless, the poor, the wretched, could always find sustenance and shelter. To preserve them from becoming scenes of disorder and bloodshed, they were all converted into places of sanctuary, where an unseen, mysterious power—the power of the Church—watched over host and guest, over monk and pilgrim, and made it criminal, under any circumstances, to break the peace.

Three monks sat by a bogwood fire in the shrine of St Bridget, in a small chamber commanding the door of the monastery. Without raved the storm; the rain fell in torrents, then ceased suddenly, and the shattered clouds flying before the wind alternately disclosed and concealed the moon. Ever and anon the convent-bell threw forth its music on the night-air, as a signal to wayfarers that there was a place of refuge at hand. The light of a lamp and of the blazing fire streamed through the wicket, directing and comforting all who approached. Within sat the three monks with a well-covered table before them, food of a substantial kind, and flagons of foreign wine, to refresh the hungry and exhausted traveller. As the night wore on, the monks nodded at each other, and the golden skirts of dreams began to flutter about their fancies. Suddenly there came a tapping, or rather rapping, at the convent door, which, having been opened by one of the brothers, admitted a man somewhat advanced in life, but of colossal dimensions and fierce aspect. His countenance and bearing, his complexion and light hair, proved him to be a Saxon, even before his language had revealed the fact. It was evident that he cared little among the men of what race he might find himself; his iron frame and ready hand, familiar with the sword-hilt, rendered him, in his own estimation, the master everywhere of his destiny. He accepted, with rough courtesy, the hospitality of the monastery, and was engaged in expressing his thanks, when another knock was heard at the wicket, and a second stranger, a smirking Gleeman, came, bowing, towards the good things on the board. But the circle of that night's guests was not yet complete: a third knock, loud and imperative, was heard, and one of the gentle brothers soon led in the new-comer, a Celtic outlaw, tall and strong, with a fell of black hair tinged with gray. He glared like a wolf upon the Saxon; but remembering where he was, took the proffered wine-cup, and having drained it to the bottom, sat down quietly by the blazing fire.

Unfortunately, both poets and prose writers, when they desire to find a pretext for relating a certain number of stories, appear to be extremely limited in the choice of a plan. Boccaccio has thrown together a number of persons who have fled from a great city to escape the plague; Chaucer, with superior ingenuity, marshals a number of pilgrims proceeding towards Canterbury, and makes them tell stories at the suggestion of a jolly host, to lessen the tedium of the way; but the author of the *Arabian Nights*, most artistic of all, contrives a situation in which the storyteller exercises her genius for the preservation of her own life. When you have laid down these three platforms, it seems easy to perceive that all future relaters of stories must adopt some scheme bearing a resemblance more or less striking to one of them. The author of *The Monks of Kilcrea* has been as felicitous in his conceptions as any among the

thousand and one imitators of *The Thousand and One Nights*. The monks sitting before the bogwood fire, having long ago exhausted all topics of conversation among themselves, and not knowing exactly how to entertain the strangers, hit upon the bright idea of making the latter at once amuse each other and them; they invite them to describe their adventures, and explain by what chance they were conducted on that wild and stormy night to St Bridget's shrine.

Who does not know that the bare skeleton of a man, stripped of all its muscles and integuments, is as well calculated to give you an idea of that man's form and features, as the outline of a story to present a true conception of the manner in which that story has been narrated by its inventor? When the business is not only to abridge but to translate poetry into prose, the difficulty of the task is more than doubled. The poet is a magician whose pencil, dipped in all the colours of the rainbow, paints rather than tells his story. He floods your fancy with imagery; he agitates your breast, he stirs your deepest passions and emotions, and thus, if need be, conceals from you the improbabilities or imperfections of his tale. When prose undertakes to deal with the same events and incidents, it immediately perceives the necessity of creating a consistent whole, of accounting for what it relates, of being reasonable, and at times even philosophical. We find ourselves in the midst of these difficulties at the present moment. The bogwood fire is burning brightly before us; the three monks, with cowls drawn forward over their faces, as if to keep out the night-air, are distributing the pastry and pouring out the red wine; the Saxon, the Gleeman, and the Rapparee already exhilarated, are beginning to entertain less objection to each other's company. Accordingly, when the request is made by the monks, the Saxon, as the first guest, breaks abruptly into the history of his life.

The Celtic poet, who had obviously never been in Kent, yet selects that beautiful county to be the scene of his first narrative. The hero, a stout yeoman, is left in early youth master of his own fortunes, with a lovely sister to watch over, and property more than sufficient for the wants of both. Of course, Alice had a lover, because no poem written in whatever age, or laid in whatever scene, in thought complete without one. Poetry is the ark in this respect—all animals enter it in pairs. Well, the Saxon's sister, Alice, had a lover, a youth of noble lineage, handsome, wealthy, and besides—which was rare in those days—a scholar. Through some perversity of nature, jealousy of his rank, or, still more, of his superiority in knowledge, and all gentlemanly acquirements, the brother hated this youth; and one day, while heated with wine, meeting him accidentally in a wood, he attacked, and would have slain him. Fortune, which is not always unjust, punished the aggressor, who appeared in the combat to be mortally wounded. The lover fled, and was never more heard of; and Alice, whilst she nursed her brother with the deepest solicitude and affection, still mourned secretly for him who had won her heart. The wounded man recovered, the sister died. Remorse then came upon the Saxon, who felt that by the sword of another he had slain the only one that had remained to him of his kindred.

A few words suffice my tale to close,  
And those shall now be briefly spoken:  
In Hepton Church a snow-white rose  
Above a green grave drooping grows,  
Where sleeps at length a young heart broken.  
There Alice lies, her gentle breast  
And wounded spirit both at rest.  
I left that place.

King Henry V., just then engaged in the preliminaries to Agincourt, the Saxon, having wasted all his

fortune, joined the hero's forces, and enjoyed the excitement of the French war. Performing some act of distinguished bravery, a nobleman in Henry's army, whose retainer he had become, bestowed on him lands in Ireland. On the night when the three monks sat by the bogwood fire, he had been proceeding on some affair of importance to Cork.

Twas evening when I left Macroom,  
And when I reached steep Carrig's ford,  
Night had flung o'er it all its gloom,  
And the fierce waters rushed and roared,  
As if a torrent through them poured.  
Though white the foam that swept along,  
The river deep, the current strong,  
I little cared for foam or tide  
When there was need for speed to ride,  
And spurred my horse in careless mood  
To cross that rough and swollen flood;  
And so, despite both start and shiver,  
I dashed him reckless at the river.  
With drooping head and quivering flank,  
In wild dismay twice back he shrank;  
But still, with spur, and voice, and rein,  
I wheeled him to its brink again;  
And rearing madly, with wild bound,  
He plunged amid the waters round,  
And swam, right through the hissing strife  
Of wind and wave, the stream, for life.  
Short was the struggle; like to foes,  
Across our course the billows rose.  
In vain I strove to stem their wrath,  
Or onwards hold my fearful path—  
Like floating foam, as if in play,  
They swept us down the stream away,  
Till, striking 'gainst a rock, my horse  
Sunk in his depths, and I was left  
To buffet the dark rushing tide,  
Almost of sense and strength bereft.

Here the poet enters into a speculation on the pleasures of drowning. But our Saxon friend had so much upon his conscience that he could not enjoy the dreamy pleasure of entering Nibban by water. He struggled desperately, and prayed to his sister as to a saint, for he was a good Catholic, conjuring her to come to his aid. She came—but her appearance we must describe in the poet's own language:

Twas at the moment when, as lost,  
My hands to heaven I frantic tossed,  
Then wildly in my heart I prayed,  
Or called on Alice to my aid;  
And instant through the gloom of night  
Flashed on the waves a sudden light,  
And on the dark and rushing flood  
The sainted spirit by me stood.  
Ay, start—I saw her, by Saint John,  
As plainly as I see ye now,  
And light around about her shone,  
Like glory from our Lady's brow!  
And at her presence instant died  
The howl of wind and hiss of tide;  
And soon, I know not in what way,  
Upon the bank I panting lay,  
As if her saving hand had bore  
Safe through the waters to the shore:  
Yet when I raised my reeling head  
To hail and bless her, she was fled!  
And 'mid the gloom that round me fell,  
'Twas then I heard a distant bell:  
And weak and faint, I tottered on,  
Through bog and brake, until I won  
Your abbey gate. My tale is done.

The conclusion of the Saxon's tale provides for the reader an unexpected and somewhat startling pleasure. From before the bogwood fire, one of the monks rises, throws back his cowl, and reveals himself to the astonished traveller as the lover of Alice and his

former foe. The hands that never met in friendship before were clasped firmly now; while the monk, with deep delight, sank on Walter's breast, returning thanks to Heaven that he had not been a murderer. This incident is managed by the poet with singular skill and tenderness. To complete the picture, the spirit of Alice floats into the chamber, and sheds a benign influence on the souls of the reconciled foes.

When this tale is ended, the Gleeman is invited to contribute his share to the night's entertainment. Our author does not soar high in search of his characters. The Gleeman has been a tapster in Dublin, where he has learned tales and legends without end. By way of preface to his narrative, he sketches slightly his own life, and supplies an explanation of his roguish air, with the expression of reckless daring which lurks in his countenance. His tale begins in a highly original and striking manner; the characters are admirably contrasted, and their peculiarities brought out with extraordinary felicity; the gorgeous scenery of Ireland in the darkest and wildest period of its history, is likewise spread out before the fancy with masterly power. No landscape-painter could equal in composition or colouring the poet's vivid delineations. Mountains, glens, cataracts, lakes, castles frowning in feudal grandeur from all but inaccessible cliffs, sweep in bewildering panorama before the mind's eye, now enveloped in mist, and now bathed in golden sunshine. Unluckily for our appreciation of the story, the machinery of the fairy system is introduced. This is a grave error in a poet of the nineteenth century. However beautiful they may have been, the fairies have now vanished from the face of the earth, and that, too, more completely than oreads, dryads, or naiads. Of this the reader becomes convinced when, in the Gleeman's story, he passes from the real to the supernatural. Up to that fatal point of transition, his interest is kept painfully alive; he sympathises with the lovers, he detests the tyrant, he is even reconciled by the warmth and hurry of his feelings to the sounds of celestial music which burst from time to time over the enchanted glen. But then suddenly, like a torch in a stormy night, the inspiration is extinguished, and we drag ourselves languidly on to the indefinite conclusion.

When we escape from the fairies and the Gleeman together, the Rapparee claims our attention. He is a true Celtic hero, loving solitude, building up half his life out of dreams; now perching with the eagle amid the pinnacles of some far-off mountain, and now rushing with savage joy to engage in deadly conflict with hostile clans. From the very dawn of his life, the Rapparee was hemmed round by a circle of misfortunes; and, worst of all, when he imagined himself to have found a sweet balm for all his hurts, he discovered that what he had mistaken for balm, was in truth the most deadly poison. The woman upon whom he had staked his life's happiness became false to him, and her falsehood led to wretchedness, madness, death. What remained to him in this world concentrated itself in the desire of vengeance. In conjunction with others, he stormed and gave up to the flames the stronghold of his enemy, through whom, in the midst of the conflagration, he again and again thrust his vindictive weapon. When revenge had thus been gratified, the triumph of victory began immediately to give way to feelings of remorse. He wished he had not killed him, and in closing his tale he reiterated his conviction that now, as age came on, he should have been almost happy, were it not that he had blood upon his hands. 'Be happy, then,' exclaimed one of the monks, 'for the miserable man who was your enemy did not die by your hands. In this form—wasted by penitence—you behold that wicked and proud man, whom you, I see, have forgiven, and whom may God also assoil!'

This termination is almost identical with that of the Saxon's tale, and therefore objectionable. Both in themselves are good, but they should not have been found in the same volume. The French translation of this poem is extremely graceful and charming. It makes Ireland look like a mountainous fragment of France, with rivers, lakes, glens, precipices, far more picturesque and beautiful than any ever beheld in that country. Such is the illusion, the spell created by language.

#### THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

The sayings and doings of the British Association at Leeds—the inauguration of the Newton statue at Grantham—and the comet, have been the things most talked about for the past four weeks. The Leeds meeting is regarded on all hands as a success, for it was harmonious, the papers sent in were numerous, and the income exceeded expenditure by about five hundred pounds. The only drawback was the president's address, which was too long, and weakened here and there by reference to authorities which advanced science very properly holds as of no authority. Among the projects for the future, a fresh series of magnetic observations is thought of; and considering how much knowledge, indeed nearly all that constitutes terrestrial magnetism as a science, has been got out of the last five years' series, we are glad to see tokens of a resumption of the work. The veteran Humboldt declares in its favour, and so do the masters of the science in this country—Herschel, Sabine, Lloyd, and they recommend the establishment of observatories at Vancouver Island, Newfoundland, the Falkland Islands, and Pekin, which have been selected because they carry the chain of phenomena into parts of the globe hitherto uninvestigated. The Norwegian government is to be asked to establish an observatory for the same period at the North Cape; and if they consent, and ours will do what the British Association ask, we think that an important stride will have been taken towards making an exact science of terrestrial magnetism.

There was something about the inauguration at Grantham which will justify a few words concerning it, even after the excitement has died away. We know that some of our most distinguished scientists—to borrow an American term—objected to the raising of a statue to Newton, on the ground that the author of the *Principia* could not be honoured by any demonstrations of ordinary mortals; but still we may be allowed to shew our respect and admiration for transcendent genius, if only as a testimony that we can respect and admire it, though at a distance. Moreover, it is something, as in the recent case of Jenner, to have erected a public statue to a man who was neither admiral nor general, and who conquered empires without the aid of fleets and armies. In the present instance, the inauguration was rendered impressive, not to say touching, by reason of the delivery of the oration by the man, take all England through, best fitted to deliver it, and by the fact that only two days previously he had completed his eightieth year. What a long life of work, in its highest sense, is therein involved! Lord Brougham was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1803, before thousands who are now fathers of numerous families were born. He, however, is not yet the father of that distinguished corporation, for the venerable Dr Fowler of Salisbury dates from 1802; and he, though in his ninety-third year, has just written a paper on Mental Phenomena

for the British Association. But to return to the inauguration: Lord Brougham's oration was a master-piece of argument and eloquence—a rare intellectual treat to those who had the happiness to hear it. It was impossible to listen to him without emotion, as he stood there in the bright sunshine at the foot of the statue, rendering homage to the illustrious philosopher, sketching briefly, yet with essential fulness, a history of the sciences which his imperishable labours lifted at once and for ever into the domain of certainty, and at the same time correcting the misstatements and the false impressions of foreign savans. That oration will remain among his lordship's master-works.

The comet has taken the world by surprise—astronomers as well as the unlearned; and though we live in the days of electric telegraphs, a vast deal of nonsense has been talked and written concerning it. And seeing that most people believe what they read in newspapers, even if they believe nothing else, so there were few who mistrusted the absurd statement started by one newspaper, and propagated by all the rest, that the 'celestial visitant' as it was called, moved at the rate of 20,000 miles a minute. However, many a keen eye observed the comet, and able heads have calculated its orbit, and ere long we shall know all that can be known about it in the present state of astronomical science.

During the comparative quiet of the scientific societies' vacation, Professor Frankland's lecture, delivered at the Royal Institution, has been much noticed. It is on an important subject—"The Production of Organic Bodies without the Agency of Vitality." Up to thirty years ago, chemists believed that it was impossible to produce organic compounds by artificial means, while there was little or no difficulty in producing the inorganic, or those from mineral substances; and the production of the former was regarded as entirely a vital function. But in 1828, Wöhler succeeded in producing urea, and great was the shock thereby given to chemical theory. Here was a product of the animal organism, actually produced and producible by ingenious contrivances in a laboratory. Some years later, Kolbe shewed that acetic acid could be artificially produced; then came Berthelot, making a great step in advance, and produced a whole series of alcoholic bodies—phenyl, naphthaline, and many interesting allied compounds. He produces glycerine, which is the basis of animal and vegetable oils and fats; and grape-sugar and these two, as Dr Frankland observes, 'yield such a numerous class of derivatives, that upwards of seven hundred compounds can now be produced from their elements without the agency of vitality.'

To select a few from the numerous organic bodies which are now capable of artificial formation, will at once shew the growing importance, and suggest the yet greater triumphs to come, of organic chemistry. Thus we find formic, oxalic, hydrocyanic, butyric, lactic, caproic, succinic, and other acids; alcohol, ether, olefiant gas, oil of garlic, and mustard, benzole, and aniline. Some of these are the more interesting, because of their relation to the animal economy; and when we find such substances as alcohol, glycerine, and sugar producible by artificial means, without the intervention of vegetation or any other vital function, we cannot but recognise a power fraught with important consequences. We have more than once shewn in the pages of the *Journal* how delicate and agreeable perfumes and fruit-flavours are produced from substances apparently the least likely to render up such present elements, from some, indeed, which are offensive. But to produce compounds which enter largely into animal nutrition is something that comes more practically home to us.

Valerianic acid used to be obtained from the root

of the plant *Valeriana officinalis*; now it is produced, and at much less cost, from its chemical elements, or from a waste (or rather what was a waste) product in the manufacture of spirit of wine. We might give other instances of the way in which art can be made to supersede the agency of nature; but enough for the present. Moreover, we do not disguise from ourselves, that though much has been accomplished, it will be long before results will be achieved in which the interests of large communities are concerned. At present, artificial sugar, glycerine, and alcohol, cost a hundred times more than those produced in the natural way. On the other hand, we have the hopeful knowledge that the way is opened for great discoveries. Could we but once succeed in forming by artificial means the nitrogenous elements of food, no lone prairie, no sun-scorched desert, no barren rock, would have terrors for the traveller or the castaway, who might happen to retain his apparatus and his store of inorganic constituents. He could create food at pleasure.

In calling attention to this subject, it will be seen that we regard chiefly the great practical results which it involves. Trade and science combined, have, within the past twenty years, made us aware of the importance of saving time. Hence we make steam do the work of wind, water, and horses; in bleaching, we treat the sun as a sluggard, and resort to quicker methods; and the fleetest mail is but a snail, compared with our telegraphic wire. 'Time,' says Professor Frankland, in a passage with which we take leave of the subject for the present—"time is also an important element in the natural production of food; and although it is true that the amount of labour required for the production of a given weight of food is not considerable, yet it is nevertheless true that this weight requires a whole year for its production. By the vital process of producing food, we can only have one harvest in each year. But if we were able to form that food from its elements without vital agency, there would be nothing to prevent us from obtaining a harvest every week; and thus we might, in the production of food, supersede the present vital agencies of nature, as we have already done in other cases, by laying under contribution the accumulated forces of past ages, which would thus enable us to obtain in a small manufactory, and in a few days, effects which can be realised from present natural agencies, only when they are exerted upon vast areas of land, and through considerable periods of time."

Australian emigrants and colonists will perhaps take interest in the information communicated to the Geological Society by Mr Brough Smyth—namely, that the colony of Victoria has, at some former period, been the scene of active volcanic phenomena, and that numerous extinct volcanoes yet remain in the country. The extent to which the surface has been altered thereby may be inferred from the fact that, in digging a well at Warnambool, the labourers came upon a bed of coarse grass at a depth of sixty-three feet, identical with the grasses which grow at the present time on the surface. Here we have proof of eruptions which have buried miles of country. It appears, however, that the eruptions consist more of ashes than of lava. Now and then, slight earthquake-shocks are felt; and Mr Smyth suggests that it might be well to inquire whether the upheaval of portions of the country, clearly traceable in places, is still going on. For our part, we think it highly probable that Australia has yet to undergo geological changes which will produce modifications of its climate, and render it much more habitable than at present.—Sir Charles Lyell, earnest in the study of volcanic phenomena, has gone once more to Sicily, to make further observations upon Etna.—Dr Tyndall, equally earnest in the study of glaciers, has spent his holiday in the

Alps, where he made a bold and successful ascent of Monte Rosa, quite alone. Adventurous imitators will now be longing to scale the same lofty peaks; but success does not attend upon all alike.—The exploration of the Brixham cave—to which we referred a few months ago—has been in part accomplished, and some important discoveries made—that is, important to the science of palæontology. We hear that more funds are wanted to complete the undertaking.

A fair notion of the progress of New Zealand may be formed from a report recently published on the subject. It sets forth that grass is rapidly superseding the tall dense fern which once overspread the greatest part of the islands; and the result is, that in four years, 1852-56, the number of sheep multiplied from, in round numbers, 233,000 to 991,000; of horned cattle, from 32,000 to 92,000; of horses, from 3000 to 9000. The pasture—though this requires further proof—is said to be richer than here in England. The British population has increased in the same period from 26,000 to 48,000, in which the males outnumber the females by 7000. Auckland is the most populous province, and New Plymouth the least. The imports in 1856 amounted to £710,868, and the exports to £318,433; and 101,596 letters were received, and 95,164 despatched. As regards healthfulness, we find that the mortality among the troops is in the proportion of one-third less than in England; and, remarkably enough, it appears that among the soldiers there occur a few suicides every year from home-sickness. Schemes are on foot for frequent and rapid communication with the Australian colonies, seeing that not only is a considerable trade growing up between the two countries, but that the jaded Australian, worn by heat and business, now resorts to New Zealand as a sanatorium, finding there the freshness and verdure denied to him at home.

Captain Denham, who is surveying the islands of Australia, reports having seen a bird at Franklin inlet, known as the mutton-bird. A settlement of about ninety persons, formed on the spot, get their living by collecting the eggs, feathers, and oil, in which operation they kill 300,000 birds a year. The oil is described as bright red in colour, and of excellent burning quality. On the Reef Islands the captain found swarms of rabbits, the progeny of a few couples which had been introduced some years earlier by Captain Stokes. Following the example, he took away a dozen brace, to start them loose as the first rabbit colonists in Shark Bay.—Specimens of cotton grown at Moreton Bay have been received and spun at Manchester, and found to make good thread, in which form the cotton has been sent back to the place of its growth, to inspirit the cultivators to further efforts.

By news from the Cape, we learn that a meeting had been held to take leave of the missionaries who are to be stationed among the Matabele and Makalolo as aids to Dr Livingstone in his endeavours to civilise those important tribes. The veteran Moffat and Mrs Livingstone were present, intending to start immediately afterwards for Kuruman. Hence, for some time to come, we may hope to get intelligence of the Zambezi expedition by way of the Cape, as well as from the eastern coast.

It appears, from the report published by the commissioners of emigration, that expatriation is again on the increase. The number that left the kingdom in 1857 was 212,875, being 30,000 more than in each of the two preceding years. And the registrar-general reveals facts concerning migration which corroborate views expressed more than once in the *Journal*, shewing that the watering-places frequented so numerously during the summer months are not the most healthy places in England. People crowd to them because it is a fashion to do so, and neglect localities whose

hygienic claims are far superior. And he states a fact derived from an average of five years, which is somewhat startling—namely, that in England, 1083 persons every year commit the crime of self-murder.

#### A NIGHT ON THE INDIAN SEAS.

We had changed steamers at Aden, and some of the officers had been on shore to inspect the fortifications; one, alas! on the signal for starting being made, had hurried on board through a burning sun, and had been struck by it. He lay dying in the single saloon of the wretched vessel in which we were to cross the Indian Ocean. My journey thus far eastward had been singularly unfortunate. I had escaped the peril of fire, of wreck, of murder, on the route, and now came, as climax to the whole, a night of strange awe, horror, and beauty, which still rests on my memory like some fantastic and wonderful dream.

The heat in the Red Sea had been fearful. Every lady of our party had sunk under it, more or less, except myself. We had with us two female servants; one, an Irishwoman, was lying between decks in high fever; the other, a lady's maid, more exacting and delicate than her mistress, was not to be found when night closed in. The vessel in which our passage across the Indian Ocean was to be achieved, was ill fitted for the purpose. She had been formerly used for carrying coals between Liverpool and Dublin, and was small, dirty, and unprovided with accommodation for passengers. She had been sent to Aden to bring back sick sepoys, with whom she was now returning to Bombay. She had but one small and very dirty saloon, and two berths of minute proportions; but we could obtain no other means of transit at Aden, and were anxious to reach India with all possible speed. The saloon in which the seventeen female passengers were destined to sleep, was occupied by the dying man; the two berths by the most suffering invalids. It was necessary that the remainder of the seventy passengers should pass the night on deck; so extempore beds were made up, the ladies partially undressing to lie down. As I alone was equal to the office of nurse in general, I volunteered to sit up near them, and do what I could to help them, for several were delirious from fever, and all required frequent drink, fanning, &c. I hoped, of course, to be assisted by the maid, and directed the man-servant to go and seek her. He returned, looking very pale and grave.

"I can't find her, ma'am; and indeed," hesitatingly, "I don't think we shall ever find her. She has several times told me that she was weary and worn out, and would jump overboard. She is not in the vessel; and a sailor tells me that he and the captain heard a plunge from behind the paddle-box an hour ago—and only look, ma'am, at who's a-following us."

I glanced in mute terror over the side, and saw dark forms lifting the water, and tumbling amidst the waves. Ah, the sharks! I could not speak for horror. Then the captain of the *Zenobia*—one of the most amiable as well as manly persons I ever met—advanced, and confirmed the evil tidings. The unhappy woman, naturally irritable, and, we hope, delirious, had sought that miserable termination of her discomfort. But there was no time to lose. Horror and awe had to be overcome for the fulfilment of actual duty. There were others suffering, even as that unfortunate had suffered; and I returned silently to my charge. For an hour or so, I was too busy giving drink, &c., to observe the scene around us. The only doctor on board—a young man on his route to join his regiment—came on deck after a time, and whispered the sad news that his poor patient of the saloon had ceased to live, and that he would be buried at daybreak. Two deaths within two hours! He helped me now, however, in my task of nursing;

and after a time our conjoint cares were successful, and our patients slept. The poor young surgeon then lay down on the deck at my feet, and was in a few minutes overpowered by sleep himself.

I looked round me. The deck was covered with sleepers, some lying on the bare planks. Here and there the pale moonbeams made their way through the covering or beneath it, and rested on slumberers who little heeded their deleterious power. A sailor good-naturedly threw a handkerchief over the closed eyes of one of the sleeping officers as he passed by, for experience tells how fatal to the sight are the beams of the eastern moon. There was a hush all through the vessel. The watch were forward—on the forecastle, perhaps—but out of sight and sound; the helmsman and myself were the sole waking beings on the upper-deck. There were no bulwarks to the vessel's side, but only a railing; therefore, as I sat, I could watch the play of the waves, and the dark hideous shadows, suggestful of terrible thoughts, which broke them at intervals.

By and by a change came over the scene. The waves that danced and leaped around our way were no longer white feathers throwing back the cold moonshine, but waves of fire flashing and glittering with quite a different light. We were passing through a sea of fire, caused, as we were afterwards told, by the phosphorescent fish and insects of those latitudes; but the sight, at such an hour, and under such circumstances, was but an additional horror. All at once, too, the wind rose audibly, and moaned sadly by, as if prophesying yet more misery. We were very near the period of the monsoon—in fact, it might be expected any day, and we dreaded it, for our vessel was scarcely sea-worthy, and could afford us very little shelter. As the wind rose and blew coldly past, I shivered, and a seaman standing near the wheel, instantly advanced and offered me his pea-jacket, absolutely divesting himself of it for my benefit. I would have refused it, but 'Jack' was so earnest in his entreaties that the lady would take it, that at last I yielded, and donned the singular vesture after the fashion of a shawl, that is, without putting my arms into it.

Very slowly the hours stole by, marked only by the so many 'bells' of the vessel. My patients slept profoundly; the breeze moaned sadly by, not bringing, however, the monsoon; the sea of fire darted and sparkled, broken now and then by the dark shadows of the 'creatures that followed in our lee,' as Barry Cornwall sings. How little those whom we had left at home in England were dreaming of the discomforts and perils of our watery way! Those ladies so delicately nurtured in their own land, so unused to hardships, alas! what might be their fate in a strange land, whose very sun even killed? A dislike to India, which I never overcame, began that night; and as if some portion of second-sight had come to me from the Highland side of my family, I dreamed that very night, when dozing beside my charge, of horrors perpetrated on English people by the sick sepoys who slept below. Alas! one of the fairest of those sleeping on the deck of the vessel was destined to be one of the first of the band of women massacred at Delhi, a little more than ten years afterwards. But I am looking too far beyond the visions of that night of horror. Daylight stole at length upon its apparently ceaseless length, as cold, chilly, and gray as it does on the watcher in England. The sleepers began to awaken; a gentleman of our party came to me, asking me to get the ladies down into the saloon as quickly as might be, as the corps had been removed long since, and they wished the deck cleared for the funeral by sunrise. I awakened my suffering fellow-countrywomen, whose sleep had proved most efficacious, and with the aid of their husbands, got them

down below. As I followed the last, a gun boomed heavily over the sea, and the sad procession bearing one beloved by us all, moved slowly to the poop.

And thus, beginning with two deaths, and ending with a burial at sea, terminated my night-watch on the Indian Ocean.

#### LOVING EYES.

Hush, sweet heart—hush ; I needs must chide

That flattering tongue of thine :

My mirror tells another tale—

Such graces are not mine,

And yet I scarce can bid thee cease,

So much thy words I prize ;

Exulting in the thought, that I

Am fairest in thine eyes.

But let me tell thee how it is

Thou findest charms in me ;

For well I wot I owe them all,

Dear heart, to love, and thee.

List, then : Mine eyes their brightness won

When—taught by love to shine—

They first reflected back the beam

Which they had caught from thine.

My arm is round, because it loves

On thy strong arm to rest ;

My hand is soft, for on thy palm

It lingers to be pressed.

My very footfall dost thou praise ;

And why ? 'Tis plain to me

That step sounds light, because, dear love,

It brings me quick to thee.

My voice thou say'st is softer far

Than that of cushat dove :

It may be, since I've learned from thee

To say, to thee, 'I love.'

Still, knowing well no charms have I,

These fancied ones I prize,

Because, dear heart, sweet heart, I owe

All to thy loving eyes.

GRIMSBY, September 28. RUTH BUCK.

#### ECCENTRIC DINNER.

A paragraph is quoted in *Notes and Queries* from the *Inventor's Advocate*, dated nine years ago, describing a dinner given at the baths of Lucca by a certain Lord B—. The meat, fish, and vegetables were at least two years old, having been preserved in a way that is now common; the carafes were supplied with water which originally belonged to the sea, but had been changed into fresh water by a chemical process then recently discovered; the wine had been fished up by means of the diving-bell, from the bottom of the Thames, where it had lain in a sunken ship more than a century; and the bread was made from wheat found by Lord B— himself in one of the pyramids, and sown in England. To a repast of this kind, we may say, we could now add a dry powder liquefied even at the table into cream, the produce of the cow, and fruit of bygone seasons apparently freshly gathered. If such details had been given not a great many years ago in a fairy legend, they would have been criticised as impossibilities unnecessarily wild and extravagant.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, and 339 HIGH STREET, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 UPPER SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.